

# How to Use Classical Music to Design High-quality Infant Massage Activities

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**Abstract.** The art of music not only has performance functions, but also has application functions, especially when combined with non-music majors and disciplines. In the field of infant care services, infant massage activities are an indispensable and important part of infant care. Many caregivers in childcare institutions or families like playing music during the massage process. However, unfortunately, most people only consider music as a background and have never thought of combining the melody, rhythm, or other musical elements of music with massage techniques to design high-quality infant massage activities, allowing infants to experience multiple sensory stimuli simultaneously, further effectively and high-quality promoting the comprehensive physical and mental development of infants. The author of this article applies professional knowledge and skills in the fields of music and infant care services, combined with practical experience, and presents detailed practical cases to conduct in-depth analysis and exploration on how to use classical music to design high-quality infant massage activities.

**Keywords:** Infant massage activities; Music elements; Massage techniques.

## 1. Introduction

Research has shown that the skin is the largest sensory organ in the human body that receives external stimuli, and it is an external receptor of the nervous system. Therefore, implementing massage activities through external skin contact before the infant can speak will effectively stimulate the infant's tactile development. However, along with touch, there are also auditory, visual, taste, and olfactory senses. Especially hearing, babies have it before birth. The development of hearing is not only about providing infants with the ability to hear sounds, but also one of the important ways to promote cognitive development in infants. For example, if we change the massage techniques on infants based on the style and rhythm of classical music during the implementation of massage activities, we can subtly cultivate infants' ability to recognize different timbres, perceive musical phrases, paragraphs, rhythms, and other musical elements. This is also an important method and pathway for infant music enlightenment. On the contrary, if we remain silent and only apply massage or use music as the background, without combining massage techniques, we will miss the best opportunity for enlightenment in the development of infants' perception from multiple perspectives.

Of course, we have many types of music to choose from. The reason for choosing classical music is because it has rich and profound connotations, rigorous structure, fluctuating forms, and durability. Children who often listen to classical music will have a richer and more fulfilling inner world. So, how should we think about and design infant classical music massage activities? Below, we will conduct analysis and research.

## 2. How to Choose Classical Music Suitable for Infant Massage Activities

Music is a magical art that has a positive impact on brain function and psychological state. This influence comes from various musical elements such as melody and rhythm in music. Just like melodious melodies and stable rhythms that relax us, fast-paced music stimulates people's vitality and motivation. So, in the field of classical music, how should we choose music to apply to infant massage activities? Below, the analysis will be conducted from three aspects: music theme, phrases and paragraphs and melody rhythm.

## 2.1 Music Theme

Generally speaking, the duration of infant massage activities is not very long, and depending on the situation, we need to take clips from one or several pieces of music to create background music. But often not all music, or all phrases and paragraphs in a piece of music, are suitable. Therefore, we need to filter what kind of music and what paragraphs to choose in this piece of music. Focusing on the theme of music is an effective method. It allows people to quickly understand the style and music personality of this piece, and quickly draw conclusions about whether you will use this music. Even in practical operation, our favorite cited music clip is the theme of this musical work.

The theme of music often appears at the beginning of a work, and people tend to prefer themes with clear emotions and easy to understand imagery rather than abstract, vague, and difficult to understand sound effects. The rhythm, beat, melody, and other musical elements presented from the theme will allow us to further confirm whether they are in line with our massage activities.

## 2.2 Phrases and Periods

In order for infants to experience the characteristics of musical phrases and other musical elements from both tactile and auditory aspects during passive massage, the massage techniques we use, the designed massage lines, and the number of times each part of the infant is massaged need to be carefully combined with the phrases and phrases. For example, if we gently stroke the infant's three lines from shoulder to toe, from shoulder to finger, and from hip to toe, we can choose a single three segment music structure. Each segment corresponds to a massage line, allowing the infant to feel the switching of body parts while also experiencing the switching of music segments. At the same time, in each line, we need to repeatedly massage the infant several times, just like a passage containing several phrases. Usually in classical music, the sentence structure is relatively neat and the length is relatively uniform. We often choose music with symmetrical 2, 4, and 8 bars as one sentence, which will be very suitable for designing the number of massages.

## 2.3 Melody and Rhythm

The music melody combined with infant massage activities does not need to be too flashy or complex, and the changes in music intensity should not be too strong. The rhythm is relatively simple, with clear beats and strong sense of rhythm, which is a good choice. For example, the beautiful and gentle theme melody in Tchaikovsky's "Waltz of Flowers" and the waltz rhythm in three to four beats are suitable as musical background materials for massage.

# 3. The Main Types of Infant Massage Techniques

Usually, massage is performed when the infant is comfortable and happy after taking a shower and before going to bed. In order to improve the massage effect, we often apply an appropriate amount of infant massage essential oil to the infant's limbs before massage. In addition, the massage technique should be gentle and not too rough. There are many massage techniques for babies, and during the process of massaging them, we often change different massage techniques. In this article, four types are mainly introduced: stroking, kneading, patting, and tapping.

## 3.1 Stroking

Usually, throughout the entire infant massage activity, a gentle touch is used at the beginning. Press the entire palm of your hand tightly against the infant's skin, driving the subcutaneous tissue to knead together. The purpose is to help the infant relax, gradually adapt, and then gradually increase its strength. The massage areas include the face, chest, abdomen, back, hands, legs, and so on. Of course, during the actual massage process, some parts of the infant can also be selected for massage based on their current situation. It should be noted that during the gentle stroking process, it is necessary to avoid the nipples in the chest and the navel in the abdomen, especially before the umbilical cord has naturally fallen off.

### 3.2 Kneading

The main areas for kneading are the arms, palms, legs, and feet. Fingers and palms wrap around the infant's arms, legs, and other parts, mainly using the palm of the hand to exert force, and pressing it rhythmically from top to bottom.

### 3.3 Patting

The patting technique requires five fingers to be together, and the wrist should be used to exert force, driving the entire finger part except for the palm, and gently patting the infant's back, arms, and thighs. The speed of tapping is faster than that of stroking and kneading, and the frequency of operation in the same area is also more intensive. It can be combined with music to rhythmically pat, which can help infants promote blood circulation.

### 3.4 Tapping

There are two main tapping methods discussed in this article: the first is to naturally bend the index and middle fingers, just like walking, alternately walking on the body with fingertips; The second type is to hold the ball in an empty hand shape, with the 2345th fingers together and the fingertips on a horizontal line, gently tapping the infant's body together.

In practical operation, these techniques can be combined according to different needs, or can be combined with the characteristics of music for comprehensive application.

## 4. A Case of Using Classical Music to Design High-quality Infant Massage Activities

This case study selects four pieces of music from the orchestral work "The Carnival of Animals" by French composer Charles Camille Saint-Saëns, including "The Swan", "The elephants", "The Aviary", and "Royal March of the Lion". It specifically analyzes and explains how to combine classical music elements such as melody, rhythm, and musical paragraphs with infant massage techniques.

### 4.1 The Swan

"The Swan" is the thirteenth piece in the Saint-Saëns Orchestra Suite "The Carnival of Animals". The orchestration of this piece is played by the cello and accompanied by two pianos. It is a well-known piece and the most popular and widely circulated piece in the suite. The accompaniment of the piano mainly consists of a continuous, uniform, and dense sound group of sixteenth notes, which, driven by changing chords, outlines a lake surface that shimmers in the sunlight and surges in the dark for the audience. The beautiful and lingering melody played by the cello seems to make us see elegant swans swimming around on the lake. The main melody performed by the cello is simple without complex decorations, and the phrases are also long and soothing, making it very suitable for babies to listen to and serve as the starting music for infant massage activities.

#### 4.1.1 Selection of music passages

We will combine this music with a stroking massage technique. The stroking massage at the beginning of this activity will involve the infant's entire body, divided into three massage lines. This music is a single three segment structure with reproduction, and the entire length of the music is moderate, and the sentence is regular, with a unified number and length of bars. Therefore, we will use the entire music. The form structure and massage design of the music are shown in Figure 1:

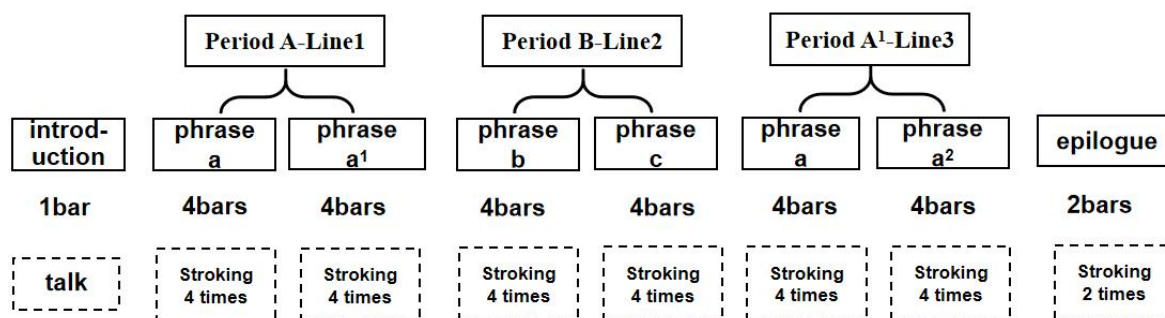


Figure 1

#### 4.1.2 Combination of music and stroking

We need to provide a language environment to stimulate infants' language development while carefully designing music backgrounds to stimulate their hearing development. In this case, after all the preparations for massage activities were ready, we looked at the infant and gently told him, "Today the zoo held a carnival, and many small animals were dancing to celebrate. Let's see which small animals were dancing?" Then, we played the audio of "The Swan", and the first section of the music was the introduction part, during this time period, tell the infant: "An elegant swan is dancing on the lake." After that, the theme melody of the cello will sound, and we will use music combined with gentle massage techniques to massage the infant in three lines:

Line 1: From shoulder to toe

Line 2: From shoulder to finger

Line 3: From hip to toe

The specific combination method is shown in Table 1:

Table 1

Massage Lines	Periods Phrases	Musical Phrase	Massage techniques	Analysis
	Introduction		talk	Language environment
Line1	A Period Phrase a:4bars		stroking 4 times	Each bar -once stroking
	Phrase a1:4bars		stroking 4 times	
Line2	B Period Phrase b:4bars		stroking 4 times	
	Phrase c:4bars		stroking 4 times	
Line3	A1 Period Phrase a:4bars		stroking 4 times	
	Phrase a2:4bars		stroking 4 times	
	Epilogue 2 bars		stroking 2 times	

## 4.2 The Elephants

"The Elephant" is the fifth piece in the Saint-Saëns orchestral suite "The Carnival of Animals". The reason for choosing this song is because the rhythm and rhythm of this music are too suitable for combining massage techniques with kneading. This piece of music is in triple octaves, and the strong weak accompaniment played by the piano fully reflects the rhythmic sense of the dance music, while the bass plays the melodic parts in a very low range, like a very bulky elephant dancing. Clear rhythms and low-frequency melodies not only allow infants to feel the rhythm of music, but also stimulate and promote the development of infants' ability to discern pitch.

### 4.2.1 Selection of music passages

This piece of music has a single three pieces structure, and the entire piece adopts a three times dance accompaniment sound pattern. The music is structured with regular phrases, and the number and length of bars are unified. But according to the design requirements of this overall massage activity, we only choose the first segment with the most obvious image as our background music. The structure diagram and massage design of the music are shown in Figure 2:

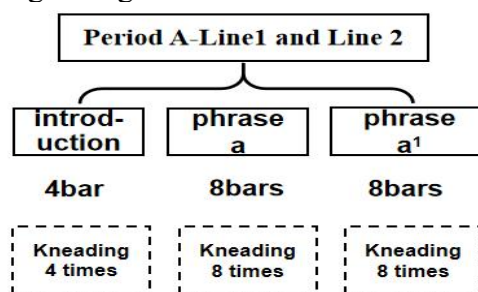


Figure 2

### 4.2.2 Combination of music and kneading




With the end of "The Swan", the stroking massage technique also came to an end. Next, we will implement kneading massage techniques for the infant. We gently told the infant during the audio playback interval between "Swan" and "Elephant": "The swan has swum away, and an elephant is dancing with heavy steps." Please note that this time, we started massaging the infant from the introduction part of the music and divided it into two lines:

Line 1: From shoulder to finger

Line 2: From crotch to toe

The specific combination method is shown in Table 2:

Table 2

Massag e Lines	Periods Phrases	Musical Phrase	Massage techniques	Analysis
Line1	Introduction 4 bars		Kneading 4 times	Each bar -once Kneading
	A Period Phrase a: 8 bars		Kneading 8 times	
Line2	A Period Phrase a1: 8 bars		Kneading 8 times	

### 4.3 The Aviary

"The Aviary" is the tenth piece in the Saint-Saëns orchestral suite "The Carnival of Animals". The orchestration of this music is very distinctive. The vibrational technique of the string instrument imitates the sound of birds flapping their wings, while the flute uses a large number of thirty-second notes to form a continuous, uniform, and dense sound group, expressing the scene of birds jumping; The forward leaning and vibrato of the piano imitate the call of a bird. This rich sound effect allows us to integrate multiple massage techniques in this process to provide babies with a richer experience.

#### 4.3.1 Selection of music passages

This music has a single three segment structure. According to the needs of this massage activity, we use the entire music as the background music. The structure diagram and massage design of the music are shown in Figure 3:

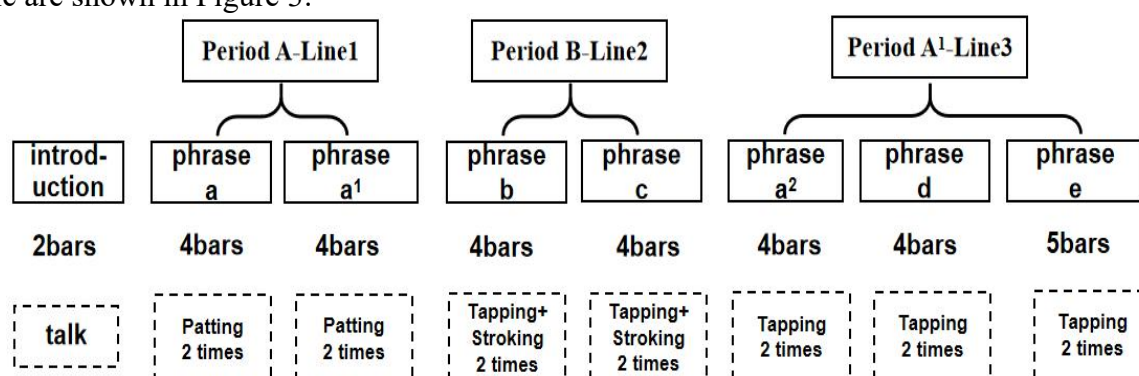


Figure 3

#### 4.3.2 Combination of music and patting

Unlike the first two single massage techniques, in the music of "The Aviary", we will combine three techniques: patting, tapping, and stroking to massage the infant. We will gently tell the infant during the audio playback interval between "The Elephant" and "The Aviary": "The elephant has gone far, and now a little bird is flying in the air, dancing happily." The first two bars of the music are the introduction section. During the performance time of the introduction section, we will gently tell the infant: "The little bird is flying." After that, the fast theme melody of the flute will sound, and we will accompany the music with a combination of tapping, tapping the gentle massage technique is divided into three lines for infant massage:



Line 1: Gently pat the arms and legs back and forth from top to bottom

Line 2: Gently pat up from the leg to the shoulder, then gently stroke down from the shoulder back to the leg



Line 3: Gently pat from the legs up to the shoulders and continue to the arms and fingertips.

The specific combination method is shown in Table 3:

Table 3

Massa ge Lines	Periods Phrases	Musical Phrases	Massage techniques	Analysis
	Introduction		talk	Language environment
Line1	Period A Phrase a: 4 bars		Stroking 2 times	Patting: Once from shoulder to finger and back to shoulder



	Phrase a1: 4 bars	and other Phrases	Stroking 2 times	Patting: once from hip to toe and back to hip
Line2	Period B Phrase b: 4 bars		Tapping+ Stroking 2 times	Once: Tapping: Legs from bottom to top to shoulders (1 bar) + stroking : Shoulder down to leg (1 bar)
	Phrase c: 4 bars		Tapping+ Stroking 2 times	
Line3	Period A1 Phrase a2: 4 bars		Tapping 2 times	Tapping: Once from the bottom of the leg to the shoulder (1 bar) and then to the tip of the finger (1 bar)
	Phrase d: 4 bars		Tapping 2 times	
	Phrase e: 4 bars		Tapping 2 times	

#### 4.4 Royal March of the Lion

"Royal March of the Lion" is the first piece in the Saint-Saëns orchestral suite "The Carnival of Animals". This music adopts the commonly used four- and four-time signature of marches, with all strings playing majestic melodies in the high, medium, and low notes, like the pace of the Lion King's inspection. The chromatic tone progressive phrases played on piano and bass instruments mimic the roar of the Lion King.

##### 4.4.1 Selection of music passages

This music has a single three segment structure, and the phrases in each segment are still relatively regular and unified. Based on the needs of this massage activity, we will skip the introduction section and start with the first piece of music, combining massage techniques. The music structure and massage design are shown in Figure 4:

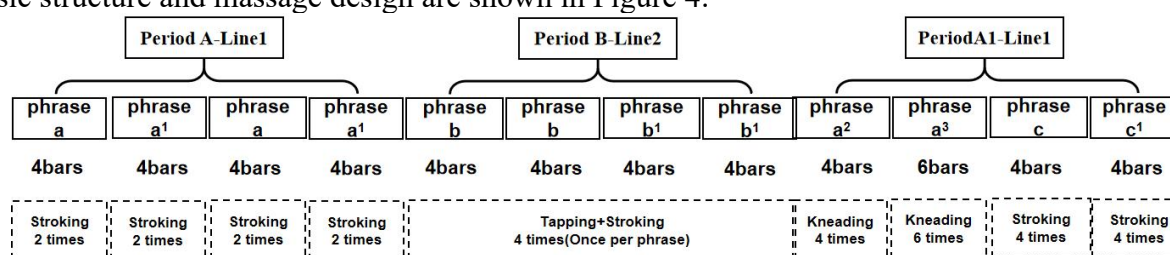


Figure 4

##### 4.4.2 Combination of music and patting

In the final stage of this massage activity, we will use the music "Royal March of the Lion" to combine three techniques: tapping, stroking, and kneading to massage the infant. We will gently tell the infant during the audio playback interval between "The Aviary" and "Royal March of the Lion": "The bird has flown away, and then the lion, the king of the forest, has come. It is patrolling with majesty." This time, we will divide it into three lines to massage the infant's body:

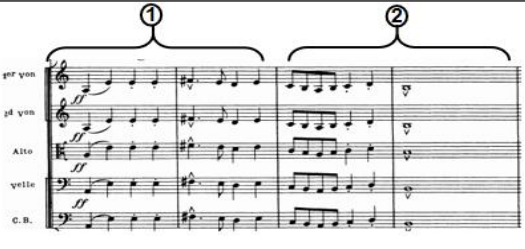


Line 1: Gently stroke the abdomen clockwise

Line 2: Tap up from the leg to the shoulder and then stroke down from the shoulder back to the leg

Line 3: Knead the arms and legs back and forth from top to bottom

The specific combination method is shown in Table 4:

Table 4

Massage Lines	Periods Phrases	Musical Phrases	Massage techniques	Analysis
Line1	Period A Phrase a: 4 bars	 <p>and other Phrases</p>	Stroking 2 times	To stroke the belly clockwise
	Phrase a1:4 bars		Stroking 2 times	
	Phrase a: 4 bars		Stroking 2 times	
	Phrase a1:4 bars		Stroking 2 times	
Line2	Period B Phrase b: 4 bars	 <p>and other Phrases</p>	Tapping+ Stroking once	Each phrase includes: To tap from leg up to shoulder (2 bars) To stroke from shoulder to leg (2 bars)
	Phrase b: 4 bars		Tapping+ Stroking once	
	Phrase b1:4 bars		Tapping+ Stroking once	
	Phrase b1:4 bars		Tapping+ Stroking once	
Line3	Period A1 Phrase a2:4 bars	 <p>and other Phrases</p>	Kneading 4 times	To knead arms from top to bottom, 1bar/ once
	Phrase a3:6 bars		Kneading 6 times	To knead arms from bottom to top, 1bar/ once
	Phrase c:4 bars		Kneading 4 times	To knead legs from top to bottom, 1bar/ once
	Phrase c1:4 bars		Kneading 4 times	To knead legs from bottom to top, 1bar/ once

By combining the above four pieces of music with different massage techniques, this infant classical music massage activity has come to an end. At the end, don't forget to tell the infant: "Today's concert is over, and the animals have all gone home. They are very happy to play with you and hope to play this game with you again next time."



## 5. Summary

Providing high-quality massage activities for infants is an inevitable trend in the infant care market. With the advancement of technology and the optimization of parenting concepts, the care of infants is developing towards a diversified and multidisciplinary approach. At present, some maternity and infant care centers provide recruitment conditions that explicitly require caregivers to possess skills in educational massage. Some higher education institutions with infant care majors have incorporated music massage programs into their practical training courses to enhance students' core competitiveness in employment. The author also led students to implement the infant classical music massage project in the classroom, achieving good teaching results. During the teaching process, even non music major students can better understand, master, and demonstrate the practical operation of infant classical music massage activities with the teacher's explanation and detailed demonstration. Music, with its unique artistic form and easy integration with other fields, plays a good auxiliary and promoting role in infant care services. Here, we hope that educators, caregivers, and practitioners in the infant care industry can pay more attention, research, and explore music that can be applied to infant massage activities, design more and more excellent infant music massage projects and programs, and jointly promote the improvement of the quality of infant care services.

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